7:Ruiz Camacho J-3 (no date) 1960 SF24 Uru SF24
Chipaya

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Cover

Valdivia, Chile, street after the earthquake (see page 3)

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MEMO FROM THE EDITORS

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● While the tragic story of the earthquake and tidal wave damage in Chile moved the world to offer immediate relief, the country began to plan a long-range program of reconstruction and rehabilitation. A comprehensive report on what's happening on this score is presented in "To Rebuild Chile," by AMÉRICA's editor George C. Compton, on page 3.

● "Land for the Farmer" (page 9), by João Gonçalves de Souza, Director of the OAS Program of Technical Cooperation, points up the conditions in Latin America that make agrarian reform urgent, and gives an up-to-date summary of what has been done in this regard. Dr. Gonçalves de Souza, who is also Director of the Pan American Union Department of Technical Cooperation, is an expert in problems of land tenure and has written several studies on the subject, dealing especially with his native Brazil.

● In "Latin America's 'Rising Expectations'" (page 26), we print excerpts from a speech by OAS Secretary General Dr. José A. Mora. His remarks about economic development needs are especially timely as the date for the Bogotá meeting of the Committee of Twenty-one on economic cooperation draws near.

● The very old and very new appear side-by-side in this issue. "Here the Past Lives On," (page 19) by Rubén Ruiz Camacho, describes the life and customs of the Bolivian Chipaya Indians, who are living much as their ancestors did 450 years ago. The author, a Colombian journalist, has written many articles for Colombian and Bolivian papers and magazines. He is presently working as an audio-visual specialist in the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture.

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By contrast, this article is preceded by a brief commentary on the progress of "Fabulous São Paulo," written by AMÉRICAS associate editor George Meek.

● Manuel Cirerol Sansores, an archaeologist who is a native of Yucatán, México, offers his original version of the celebrated Maya legend of "The Dwarf King of Uxmal," on page 23. The author has written several books and articles on Maya themes.

● Matilde de Ortega, noted Ecuadorian writer and critic who is now with the Editorial Division of the Pan American Union, interviewed Brazilian artist Marcelo Grassmann, one of whose works is shown on the page opposite.

● Free-lance writer Reese Wolfe was born and raised in San Francisco and lived for two years in Costa Rica. During a recent four-months' trip through South America he met the postman-scientist who is described in "The Postman Who Caught Butterflies" on page 30.

● "Plowshares, Not Swords," (page 34), the story of a vocational school in an unusual setting in Costa Rica, was written by Carmen M. Montes. A Puerto Rican journalist, she is now working for the U. S. International Cooperation Administration in Nicaragua.

[Title Page]

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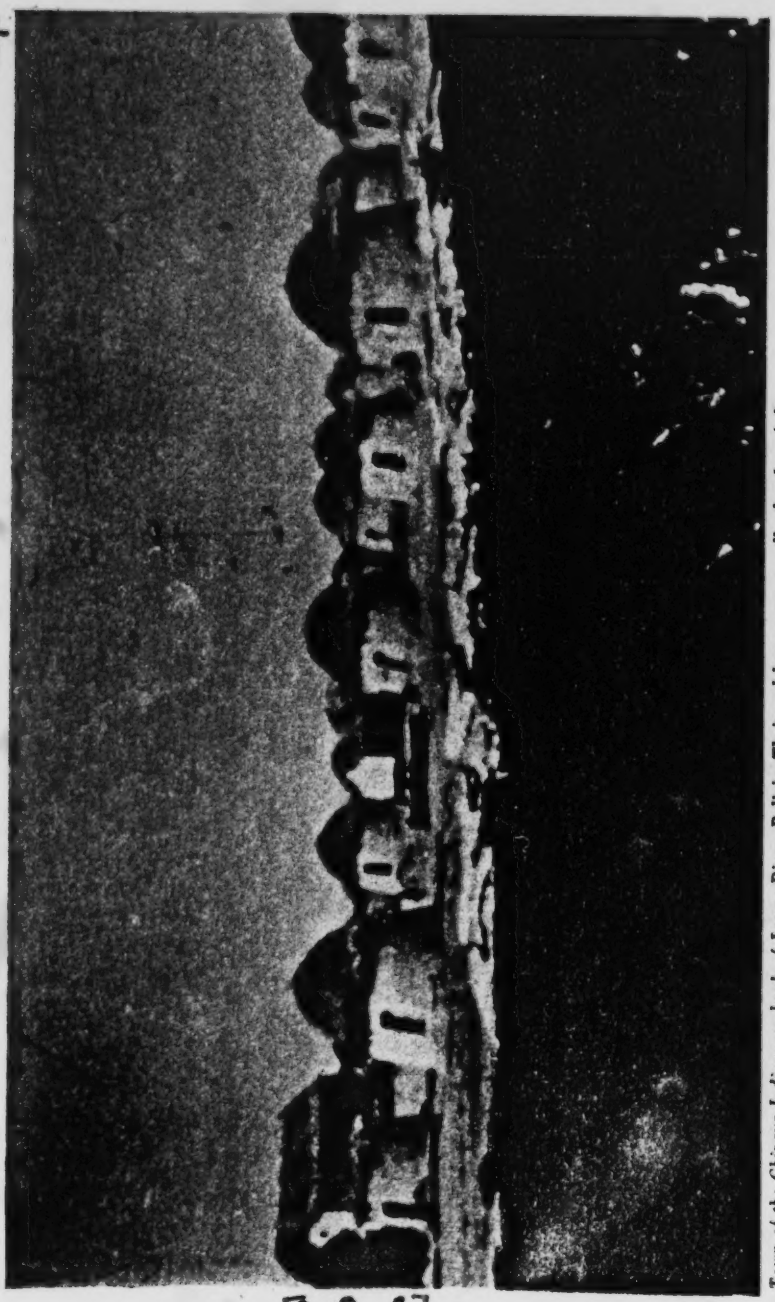

Town of the Chipaya Indians on bank of Lauca River, Bolivia. Their sod houses are usually thatch-roofed

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Chipaya

[P.19-B]

Here The Past Lives On

RUBÉN RUIZ CAMACHO

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IT MIGHT STILL BE A.D. 1500 in a remote section of Oruro Department of Bolivia today. Here is the retreat of the Chipaya Indians, the living people who can give us an idea of rural life in a distant corner of the great Inca Empire. The few hundred individuals of Santa Ana de Chipaya are the remainders of a once numerous people whose territory extended to the northern shores of Lake Titicaca. Their language, Uru-Chipaya, was called "one of the three main languages of the kingdom" by the sixteenth-century chroniclers of Peru, which included what is now Bolivia. Over the centuries the more powerful Quechuas and Aymaras have seized their lands, forcing them back into a region where life is particularly difficult. But they have made remarkable use of their harsh, ungenerous environment. In their isolation, they have retained their pre-Columbian customs more completely than any other Andean group.

And they are isolated. The modern world did not even know of their existence until it was reported by the famous Peruvianist Max Uhle toward the end of the nine-

[R19-C]

teenth century. To reach them today, you travel by train from La Paz to the city of Oruro, then by car or bus to Curaguara de Carangas. From there you must walk over a desert worthy of Siberia to the left bank of the Lauca River, where a canoe must be found for the crossing, before you go on to the village.

Little is known of Chipaya history. It has been conjectured that they may be the descendants of one of the first groups to reach the American continent. They call themselves the descendants of the *chullpas*, the ancient inhabitants of the area who, according to legend, hid themselves in reed baskets when the sun appeared for the first time.

The *chullpas* are still in the neighborhood, silent mummies resting in the square sod houses they built long ago. The word *chullpa* is also used for the burial houses. The ghost villages of *chullpas*, their doorways invariably facing east, can be seen by travelers today. Modern Indians avoid them with superstitious dread. It is claimed that the Chipayas are feared by the stronger Aymaras be-

[Text continues on p. 20-B]
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Chipaya woman

Below: Chipaya sacrificial rites

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cause of their origins; the conviction they themselves hold of their own superiority leads them to treat the Aymaras haughtily and proudly. Nevertheless, commercial exchange is carried on between the two groups, and all Chipayas speak Aymara as a second language, although they speak Uru among themselves.

Only a prodigy of work and skill has enabled the Chipayas to survive in this bleak land—"the barren and desolate plain on which we live," as one man bitterly described it. Lacking trees and even soil suitable for making sundried brick, they build their houses of sods hacked from the plain, piling them in a circular bee-hive shape, sometimes all the way to the peak, sometimes making a thatched roof of arched bundles of a shrub called *tola*. The doorways face east. Usually the only article of furniture is a wooden table, used only for household ceremonies. Very heavy woolen blankets serve as beds, as they did in pre-Columbian days throughout the Andes. Today a few families sleep on low earth benches of the kind other Andean Indians have long made in imitation of Spanish beds.

The Chipayas are shepherds, raising llamas, sheep, and pigs. Like many others who tend flocks, they dislike to kill their animals for food, and subsist mainly on potatoes

Chipayas blowing their flutes on festival day

and quinoa, supplemented by the wild tubers they gather, an occasional vicuña, and sheep's-milk cheese, which is also their chief commercial product. In characteristic Andean fashion, the potatoes are allowed to freeze and dry and are then ground into *chuño* flour.

Land ownership in the village continues in the pattern of what has been called Inca communism. The people are divided into two rival hereditary groups or moieties, and the members of each group have joint ownership of their pastures. The cultivated lands are divided into strips of thirty by nine hundred feet that are reassigned each year to the various families by the head of each moiety.

to individual families by the head of each moiety. The altitude and the high salinity make the land infertile, and crops are meager. Sowing is done with a spade or sometimes a pointed stick, pushed into the earth with a strong thrust, forming a dry hole in which the seed is planted.

The people of the Andes have been master weavers for long over a thousand years. Modern Chipaya women carry on the art on looms like the ones their ancestors used, weaving the cloth for the family clothes from hand-spun llama wool. The women dress almost exactly as their ancestors did when the Spanish arrived. The basic garment is a rectangular shirt, woven in one piece with an opening left for the head. The blue sleeves that are sewn on are a modern addition. A black or gray tunic (*urku*) with a decorative border is worn over this, covering the whole body from the shoulders to the ankles. This ancient style has been slightly altered under ecclesiastical influence; now most of the women sew up the sides to form a sort of skirt. The sash is woven with black and white geometric designs. An ample mantle completes the costume. Long pins with large flattened heads are used to secure the mantle, and as ornaments in the hair. When the sun is strong, they protect themselves with an *unkuña*, a folded cloth worn on the head, exactly like the ones shown on Inca pottery.

Perhaps the most striking pre-Columbian survival is the famous "Titicaca coiffeur" still worn by many of the

women. The hair is divided into innumerable tiny braids, each decorated with a small flat piece of bone, or a miniature bronze idol exactly like those found at Tiahuanaco.

Chipaya men wear a costume similar to the *tipoy* used by various Indians in eastern Bolivia. It resembles the shirt worn by the women, but is fuller because it is square. In former times it was the only garment worn by the men; trousers are a recent addition. Colorful decorated pouches are always slung from the belt. The short striped poncho is known as the Chipaya cape. The hair is cut short all the way around and is covered with a cap similar to the *chullo* of the Aymaras; the distinction lies in the broad ear flaps worn by the Aymaras in contrast to the smaller ones and the much finer cloth of the Chipaya caps.

Every Chipaya family owns at least one drum. These instruments are common in the altiplano, but the square shape of the Chipaya drum makes it unique. It is also unusually small, measuring six to eight inches on a side and about two inches in thickness. It is covered with tanned llama skin, stretched over a wooden frame. This instrument is thought to be pre-Columbian, since its unusual construction is so dissimilar to that of the drums introduced by the Spaniards. The Chipayas make two kinds of flutes. The straight Andean flutes are generally made of bamboo, which is brought from other regions and becomes brittle very quickly in the dry climate here.

[TEXT continues on P. 22-B]

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Features, hair style, and cap of this Chipaya mark him as different from Aymara

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Woman displays braided hair style and pin, another the cloth worn on the head for protection from sun

[P.22-A]

They are often reinforced with rawhide bindings, and are handled with great care. The *flauta de pico* is blown through a mouthpiece at the end. To make this kind of flute the Chipayas use the curved branches of the *tola* shrub, which gives these instruments their distinctive shape.

They also use the *ayo*, a round stone that gives out strange sounds through a hole in its center. Played with the other instruments, it produces a heavy music, slow and melancholy. The sound emitted depends on the size of the stone and the way it is struck.

Pottery making is unknown today among the Chipayas, and probably has been for many generations, since all their words for pottery are Aymara. The Chipaya women bring water from the Lauca River in very large jars, carrying them on their shoulders with the help of an ingeniously knotted cord of llama wool, exactly in the manner shown on ancient Chimu vases. From time immemorial the Chipayas have made beautiful coiled baskets of straw.

Chipaya religion, a blend of pagan and Catholic features, is basically the same as that of the Aymaras, although it probably preserves the pagan aspects in purer form. Pachamama, the Earth Mother, is the favorite goddess, and is often confused with the Virgin Mary. They also worship St. Philip, St. Jerome, and St. Ann; a host of spirits called *malleus;* the Lauca River; the nearby moun-

[P. 22-B]

tains; and the tower of the village Catholic church, which is regarded as a particularly powerful fetish and is known as *Mallcu Mayor*. The other *mallcus* are represented by small conical sod towers scattered around the countryside. Sacred stone fetishes or *samiri* protect the prosperity of the village; in the homes, a stuffed wildcat or hawk serves as a protective household spirit. When a new house is built, a sheep is sacrificed and its blood is sprinkled on the roof and walls.

One of the principal fiestas comes on New Year's Eve. At Carnival time, an important fertility rite is celebrated; cheeses and other foods—symbolic of the desired abundance—decorate the church tower and the dancers.

The high point of the ceremonies in honor of the deities is the sacrifice of the three main animals on which the Chipayas depend: a llama, a sheep, and a pig. These will be eaten at a communal feast the next day. The officiating *yatiri*, or priest, offers the blood, mixed with flour, to the four directions, and pours it on the *mallcu* cones and the *samiri* stones. The prayers always express the longing for fertility, for water, and for the increase of the herds. Alcoholic libations are offered, and much alcohol is consumed at the major festivals. The usual monotony of daily life is forgotten. Dancing goes on far into the night, as the slow, mournful music of the flutes and drums dispells for a while the grim, cold silence of this empty land.

[P. 22-C]